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ABSTRACT

These guides are designed for use by early childhood teachers in conjunction with four popular children's books, providing teachers with lesson plans and activities to develop their students' thinking skills. Each guide focuses on a specific book and skill as follows: (1) the guide for "The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters" emphasizes the whole language approach to teaching writing skills; (2) the guide for "The Paper Bag Princess" emphasizes predicting skills; (3) the guide for "Pigs" emphasizes sequencing skills; and (4) the guide for "The Velveteen Rabbit" emphasizes self-esteem. The guides also contain ideas for integrating the books and lessons across the curriculum. (MDM)

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A THINKER TOOL

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for

The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters

by Janet and Allan Ahlberg

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A Thinker Tool
for

The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters

by
Janet and Allan Ahlberg

Liesl Banks-Stiegman

A Thinker Tool for *The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters*
First Printing

Published by IRI/Skylight Publishing, Inc.
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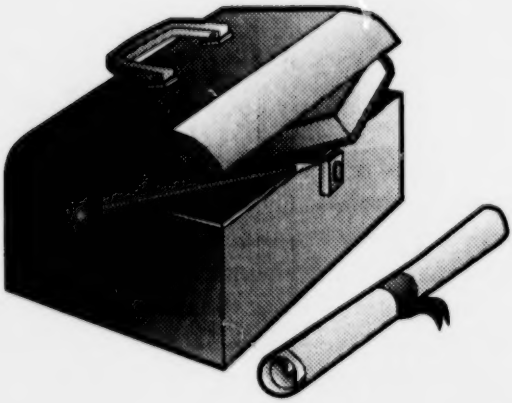
WHOLE LANGUAGE: WRITING

The whole language approach to learning is based on the idea that students learn holistically; integrated reading and writing activities reflect the way language is used in the world outside the classroom. It is a natural approach to teaching communication that is more genuine for the children. When students learn through literature, material becomes more real, more relevant, more exciting, more sensible,...and whole.

The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters by Janet and Allan Ahlberg is ideal for developing a whole language lesson...or even an extended whole language unit. The book illustrates for children that writing ***is*** communicating. It lends itself to a multitude of language arts activities from grammar, spelling, and reading, to writing, listening, and speaking. This Thinker Tool offers six lessons which combine thinking skills with creative writing. These lessons can be used individually or as a complete unit.



What are Thinker Tools?

Thinker Tools are created with the teacher in mind. Based on quality student resources, Thinkers Tools help instructors apply a thinking strategy to an actual lesson. The exercises found in Thinker Tools offer educators a starting point with activities that serve as models for thoughtful instruction. Teachers can modify or replicate the lessons with other age-appropriate materials, eventually creating lesson plans of their own.

The Writing Process

An integral part of any whole language lesson is the writing process. Students should be familiar with and practice these steps in order to produce the best writing possible.

Steps in the Writing Process

Step 1. **Prewriting:** Students should be thinking about what they are going to write. Allow time for brainstorming, planning, research, and discussion.

Step 2. **Writing:** Students should put ideas down on paper and begin to construct their first draft without concern for spelling, grammar, or punctuation.

Step 3. **Revising:** Students polish their writing by making additions or deletions, changing ideas, and rewording or clarifying when necessary.

Step 4. **Peer Editing/Proofing:** Students examine their writing for spelling and grammatical errors. They may wish to exchange their work with a friend who can serve as a peer editor.

Step 5. **Publishing/Presenting:** Students will share their work with the class either by presenting it orally or "publishing" it in the form of a final draft.

The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters: Whole Language

A Unit Plan

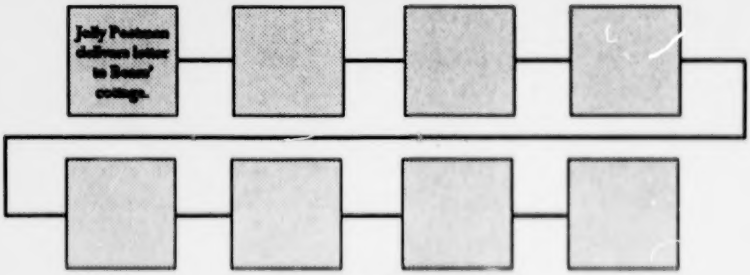
ACTIVITY

1. Introduce your students to the book *The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters* by Janet and Allan Ahlberg. Tell students that they will have the opportunity to practice their writing skills using this special book. [Note: It is best if each student has a copy, however students can share with a partner or with a group.]

2. Read the story out loud as a class, pausing to allow students to read and examine each piece of mail the postman delivers.

3. After you have finished reading the story, allow time for class discussion. Ask students to close their books. As a class, practice sequencing and memory skills as you create a story map representing each of the postman's stops. Use the graphic organizer entitled the Sequence Chart to map the story. The first event of the story should be recorded in the top left box, with each event following in sequential order.

4. Follow up this lesson with all or any of the suggested lesson plans for using *The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters.*

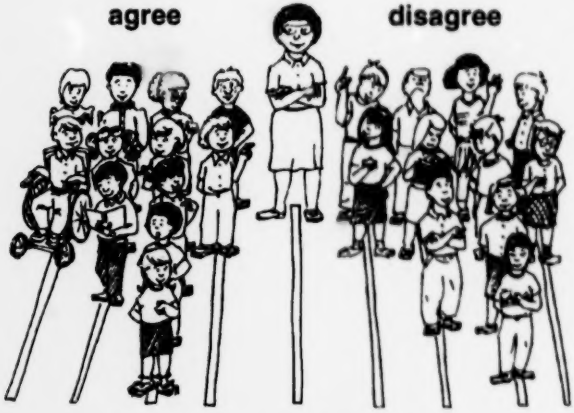


Sequence Chart

Lesson Plan #1: The Three Bears' Cottage - Apology Letter from Goldilocks (Evaluation)

This lesson plan incorporates student evaluating skills with writing skills, as students make value judgments concerning Goldilocks. Ask a student to re-tell the story of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" in order to refresh everyone's memories. Next, read Goldilocks' apology letter to the class.

Tell students that you want them to make some decisions and that they will convey their opinions by being part of a Human Graph. Explain how the Human Graph works.



Human Graph

Human Graph Directions: Stand in the center of the room, and have students gather around you. Then draw imaginary lines dividing the space and assign degrees of agreement. (Note: masking tape can be used to create the lines, making it easier for younger students to comprehend. Use the drawing as a model.)

Now, relay a statement concerning Goldilocks and indicate the side for "agree" and "disagree." Allow students to stand on the line in a position that reflects their opinion. Now ask them why they chose that line. Give students time to explain their decision. Allow students to move as they change their minds, but also encourage advocating an opinion. Question various students along the graph.

Use some of these agree/disagree statements or those of your own for the Human Graph.

- It was wrong for Goldilocks to go into the Bears' home without being invited.
- Eating up Baby Bear's porridge was a good idea.
- Breaking Baby Bear's chair was not very nice.
- Writing an apology letter to the three Bears was a nice thing to do.

As a follow-up activity, have students write a paragraph relaying an opinion of their own. They must explain why they agree or disagree with the subjects. Students may write about one of the opinions used in the Human Graph.

Lesson Plan #2: The Witch's Cottage - Advertisement (Classification)

Students must work in groups for this classification lesson. Each group will examine the advertisement delivered to the witch and try to determine the general categories of products shown. For example, food, clothing, housewares, etc. Once

groups have reached a consensus on the categories represented in the ad, students must classify each item on the flyer and place it in the appropriate group. Circulate around the room to monitor progress. Once groups have finished allow students to share their results with the entire class. Discuss the results and why items were placed where they were.

Now tell students that they will be creating their own class catalog designed specifically for witches. From the categories generated within their groups, assign each group a page in the class catalog. For example, one group will work on the clothing section, while another group works on the housewares section. Students will create products for witches, and then write a brief description of each product.

Allow groups ample time to brainstorm what items to include. Next students should begin to record their items on paper. The groups should continue to follow the writing process with revising, peer editing/proofing, and finally, publishing/presenting. If possible, allow students time to illustrate their catalog pages.

One student from each group can orally present his or her group's catalog page to the entire class. When all are completed, they can be assembled into a class catalog for students to read and examine in their free time. Ideally each student could have a copy to keep.

Lesson #3: The Giant's House - Postcard from Jack (Visualization)

Students will practice their visualization skills in this lesson. Jack sent the Giant a postcard about his trip. Make sure each student has an opportunity to see and read Jack's postcard.

1. Tell them their job is to pretend they are Jack. They must

imagine what it would be like to be Jack on vacation. Have them close their eyes and picture a scene in their heads. Where are they? What do their surroundings look like? What does it feel like to be there? Is it hot or cold, damp or dry? Is it sunny, cloudy, snowy, or windy? What does it sound like? Are there birds chirping? Noisy cars and trucks? What does it smell like? Does it smell like a field of flowers, a fishy smell of the ocean, or the smell of the city? Give students ample, quiet time to visualize their vacation destination. Encourage them to use all of their senses.

2. After students have had time to think, let them jot down their ideas and answers to your questions.

3. Students should write a descriptive paragraph from Jack's point of view, explaining to the Giant exactly where they are and what it is like. To aid students in constructing their paragraphs, you may want to prompt description by listing questions that they can answer in their writing.

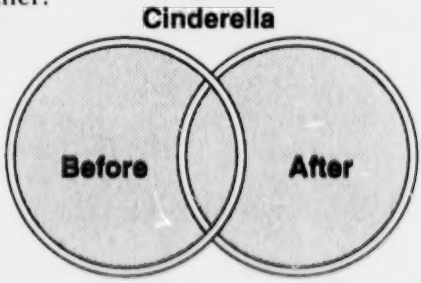
4. Provide enough time for students to revise and peer edit/ proof their work. Allow students to illustrate their postcards as part of the publishing process.

5. As an alternative, students can have a partner illustrate their postcard using just the written description as a guide. Discuss how closely the descriptions and pictures match.

6. Encourage students to think about their thinking *and* writing with these discussion questions. What could students do to improve their descriptive writing? How is this writing different from other writing? What steps did they take to create their paragraph?

Lesson #4: The Palace of Cinderella & The Prince (Comparing & Contrasting)

Students may work in groups for this assignment in comparing and contrasting. Each group should receive a copy of the letter and book that the postman delivered to Cinderella. Allow students to review and discuss the story of "Cinderella." Supply each group with a Venn Diagram and explain that they are to discuss Cinderella's life both before and after she became a princess. Explain how to use the Venn Diagram. Show students how to place information regarding "before" in one circle and "after" in another.



1. Have the groups brainstorm about Cinderella. What was her life like before she became a princess? What about after? Did anything stay the same?

2. After groups have discussed Cinderella, they can work together to create a paragraph about Cinderella—comparing and contrasting her life.

3. Discuss how this writing assignment was different from the witch catalog? How was it different from the postcard to the Giant? What steps did they take to create their paragraph?

Lesson #5: Grandma's Cottage (Prediction)

This lesson incorporates predicting and hypothesizing into student writing as students theorize what a character's response will be. Make sure each student has a copy of the letter addressed to the Wolf.

1. As a class, discuss the content of the letter. Who is it from? What is going on? Is it a friendly letter? What is the tone of the letter?

2. Based on what students know about the "Wolf" from stories in the past like "Red Riding Hood" and "The Three Little Pigs"—Ask them what they think this wolf has done? Ask students about the line "your offer of shares in a turnip or apple picking business are declined," what does it mean? What do you suppose the Wolf offered then?

3. Based on their discussion about the Wolf, students are to write a response letter to Harold Meeny as if they were the Wolf. They must hypothesize and predict what kind of reaction the Wolf will take to this letter and then write a response. Students should pay special attention to the tone of the letter.

Lesson #6: Goldilocks' Birthday Party (Inventing)

This lesson plan combines the creative thinking skills of inventing with the writing process. Make sure each student is able to read the birthday card from Mrs. Bunting and Baby Bunting to Goldilocks.

1. Review the various types of letters found throughout *The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters*. For example, an apology letter, advertisement, business letter, postcard, and so on.

2. Have students choose a fairy tale character to send their own mail to. Students may pick the type of letter they would like to send including any of those discussed.

3. Allow students ample time to brainstorm ideas and think about what they would like to write. If necessary, students should be able to use the library to review several fairy tales before choosing their fairy tale "pen pal."

4. After students have decided who to address their letters to, they can begin to write a first draft. Next, make sure students follow the revising and peer editing/proofing process.

5. Allow students to publish or present their work.

Whole Language Activities

- Students can practice grammar and spelling skills by correcting Goldilocks' errors in her apology letter to the Three Bears.
- Create a spelling list from words used throughout the book for students to practice.
- To practice speaking skills have students act out the story in class.
- Use various letters to teach a lesson on the parts of speech– e.g., Witch's advertisement for adjectives, or the letter to the Wolf for nouns.
- Have students write a fairy tale of their own and present it orally to the class.
- Test listening skills by reading other fairy tales aloud and discussing them.

Integrating Across the Curriculum

Art Activities:

- Students can construct and design their own mailboxes for letters.

- Have students design and create their own stamp.

History Activities:

- Students can learn about and research the postal system. For example, as a class study the Pony Express.

- Ask students to find out how long people have been collecting stamps. Have them research the history of stamp collecting.

Science Activities:

- Have students make predictions about how paper is made. Have them research paper making. Then obtain a paper making kit so they can learn how to make their own paper.

- As a geography activity, have students find the answer to this question: If you wanted to send a letter in 1860 from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sacramento, California, what states would the pony and his rider have to cross to deliver the letter?

Math

- Students can solve an algebra or word problem using the "writing process" from page five. They can work together to find a solution, double check their thinking, and revise their answer if necessary, similar to the writing process steps.

- Give students a mathematical problem and have them find two separate solution paths. They must record how they solved these problems in order to show and explain their solutions.

Recommended Reading

Blueprints for Thinking in the Cooperative Classroom

Keep Them Thinking

Patterns for Thinking: Patterns for Transfer

Start Them Thinking

Teach Them Thinking

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The Cooperative Think Tank: Graphic Organizers to Teach Thinking in the Cooperative Classroom

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A THINKER TOOL

for

The Paper Bag Princess

by Robert N. Munsch

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The Paper Bag Princess

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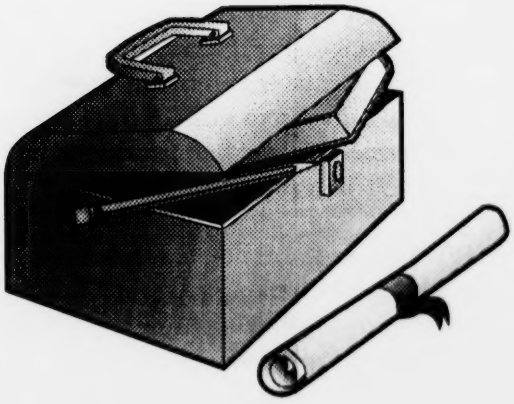

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Teaching Thinking: Predicting

Creative and critical thinking skills are crucial to students as they ready themselves to face the future. A curriculum that stresses critical and creative thinking skills better prepares students for the ever-changing, increasingly technical world in which we live. Teachers can teach students to think by encouraging and developing the micro-skills of thinking. Among the unending list of micro-skills are: brainstorming, predicting, visualizing, classifying, and prioritizing.

The Paper Bag Princess, by Robert N. Munsch, is an excellent vehicle for an exercise in thinking. As you read aloud to the class, have students concentrate on listening to visualize the story. Use the BET strategy for teaching predicting skills in your lesson.

Predicting

Before implementing this lesson plan, become familiar with the strategy for teaching and exercising student predictions. Use the BET acronym and chart to introduce this strategy to the class.

Introduce the concept of predicting (making a guess about what will happen next, based on what you know) to the class. Give examples of times when students have had to use prediction skills, such as guessing the ending of a favorite television show or book.

Show the class the BET chart and explain that predictions are written on each line, and then scored. Tell students that scoring is not for points. The scores tell them whether their guess is "hot" or "cold." If a prediction or guess proves to be on target, students can record a "+" in the box at the end of the line. If their prediction was off target, they should record a "-". Students who record a "-" should not feel discouraged. It just means they should guess again and revise their prediction. Tell students not to make wild guesses, but instead to think about what they know before they make a guess.

BASE ON FACTS
Elicit the facts and data about the topic or content from students using small groups.

EXPRESS PROBABILITIES
Evoke student predictions that are probable and possible from the groups.

TENDER YOUR BET
Instruct each student or small group to discuss and select their "best guess" and jot down their prediction for each BET.

Then: VALIDATE
SCORE
REVISE; readjust; refine your idea
BET again based on new information

#	BET	+/–
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Scoring

• Score a (+) if your "bet" has not been invalidated by the new information, that is, if it's still a possibility.

• Score a (-) if the reading suggests a different direction than the thinking in your "bet."

Use the BET steps to model an example with the class. Try "predicting the weather" or one of your own.

Predicting the Weather

1. Ask your students—"When you woke up this morning what did the sky look like?" Gather student responses; list them on the board if necessary to keep track. This step elicits facts upon which you **base** your prediction.
2. Discuss student observations. Evoke all probable and possible predictions about the weather. This step is **Expressing Probabilities**.
3. Now ask the class to make a prediction about what the weather will be like today, based on the information they discussed. This step is **Tendering a Bet**.
4. Next ask students if their parents or possibly a friend told them about the weather today. For example, did mom say "Wear a heavy coat" or "Bring an umbrella"? This step is **Validating**. Using additional information, students see if their predictions are plausible.
5. Have them decide as a class what this new information means. Have them make a prediction together. Ask the students to check their individual BETs. Are their previous predictions about the weather still a possibility? Students can score their guesses with a "+" or "-". This step is **Scoring**.
6. If students gave themselves a "-", they can revise their prediction based on the new information and BET again. This step is called **Revising**.
7. Last, read the weather report from a newspaper to the class. Have students check their BETs. How closely do their BETs match what the paper says? Have the class score their BETs one last time.
8. Talk with the class about their weather predictions—were they on target or off target? What was difficult about predicting? What did they need to do in order to make a prediction?

The Paper Bag Princess: Predicting

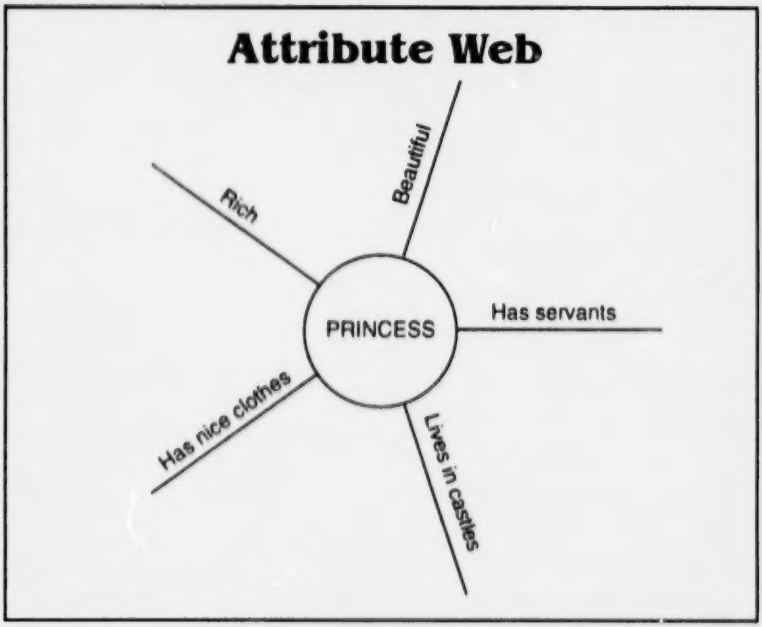
A Lesson Plan

THINKING SKILL: *Predicting*

OBJECTIVE: To improve student prediction skills.

ACTIVITY

1. Arrange students in groups of three. Start the lesson by telling the children you will be reading a story about a princess. Have students brainstorm about the images that a princess conjures up based on the facts that they already know. "What do you think of when you hear the word *princess*? How are princesses supposed to act, look, and dress?" Use an attribute web to organize the class ideas. This step allows students to gather facts and data upon which to base their predictions.



2. After you generate the attribute web about princesses, tell students that the name of the story is *The Paper Bag Princess.* Do not show them the cover of the book. Have students make predictions from the title. Ask them to give you the possibilities and probabilities as to why the story is called *The Paper Bag Princess.* Next have each group tender a BET, or make a prediction. Students should record their BETs on their charts. This is BET #1, based on prior knowledge and information. Students will be able to tell how accurate their prediction is as the story unfolds.

3. Begin reading the story to the class. Stop immediately after the dragon carries off Prince Ronald. Ask the children affective questions: How would they would feel if they were the princess and found themselves in this predicament? Why would they feel that way? Ask students to predict what Elizabeth will do next based on what they know about princesses. This is BET #2.

4. Read the next page to validate student predictions. Have groups score both BET #1 and BET #2 by placing a (+) or a (–) in the box. How close were the BETs?

5. Continue to read the story aloud. Stop after the princess asks the dragon to burn down the forests. Ask students to guess why Elizabeth would ask the dragon to burn up so many trees (BET #3). Have the students justify their answers with examples from the story.

6. Read the next page and have children score their previous BETs. Did they predict well? Are they close?

7. Read the next page and stop after Elizabeth asks the dragon to fly around the world again. Ask the class why Elizabeth is so interested in the dragon's powers. For BET #4, ask students what they think will happen next. Sample the group predictions. Ask them to support their predictions.

8. Continue reading the story, stopping before the last page. Ask the class to make one final prediction. Do they think that the prince and princess will still get married? How do they think the story will end? This is BET #5.

9. Read the very last page and discuss it with the class. Did the story turn out as they expected? Was the princess in this story the same or different from other princesses that they have heard or read about? How?

METACOGNITIVE DISCUSSION

Now that students have practiced the skill of predicting, it is time for them to "think about their thinking" and absorb what they have just done. This type of thinking is referred to as **metacognition**. Metacognition helps students to make sense of what they have learned by reflecting on the work they've done.

The following questions will help students think through the process and evaluate whether or not they have grasped the concept of "predicting" from the lesson.

Have students work in groups to answer each of the following questions.

QUESTIONS FOR PROMOTING METACOGNITION

1. What were you supposed to do?
2. What did you do well?
3. What would you do differently next time?
4. Do you need any help?

In addition, have students complete a PMI chart. The PMI chart allows students to think about and evaluate the activity just completed. Students will use the PMI chart to discuss predicting. What did the students find beneficial about predicting? What about it was a problem for them? What did they find interesting?

PLUS	MINUS	INTERESTING

CLOSURE

Have students make a personal prediction about their day. Student predictions can pertain to anything from "I predict the teacher will give us homework" to "I predict I will be late for lunch." A personal prediction allows students to see how they use predicting skills every day in their own lives.

Integrating the Skill Across the Curriculum

Extend the lesson with a few of these "thought starters." You can adjust them to your grade level.

Writing

- Students can write a story about a princess or prince and let a partner predict the ending.
- Have students write a letter predicting a disaster that will befall their castle.
- Allow students to make up a new ending for *The Paper Bag Princess.*

Literature

- Have the class use the BET strategy with a film or video.
- Suggest that students watch a favorite television show and stop during commercials to record their predictions as to what will happen next.
- Students can choose another story about a princess and rewrite it so that the princess makes a prediction. For example, Cinderella may predict who will find her glass slipper.

History

- Encourage the class to predict outcomes in current events.

- Have them predict various "what if" scenarios, such as "What if the south had won the Civil War?"

Science

- Students can predict outcomes of science experiments (e.g., "What items will stick to a magnet?").
- Have students predict the impact of certain actions on the environment (e.g., "What if we never used paper bags?").

Math

- Have students graph data and predict a trend.
- Students can try to predict the stock market.
- Have the class make predictions about reasonable outcomes to story problems.

Art

- Students can guess what new colors can be made by mixing various colored paints.
- See if students can predict something about an aspect of an artist's life from his or her artwork.
- Remove the last panel of several comic strips and have students predict the "punchline." Then have them draw that panel.

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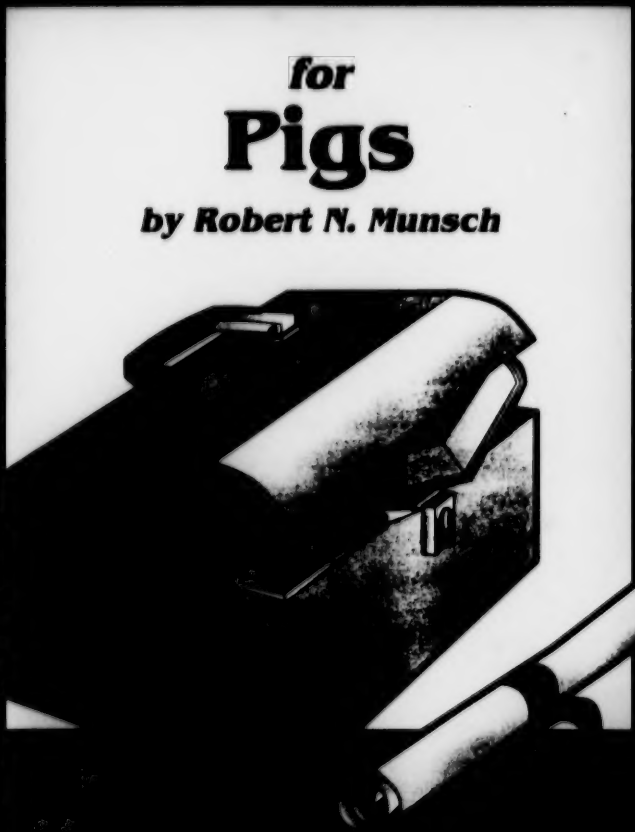

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Design and Graphics: Bruce Leckie, Michael A. Melasi

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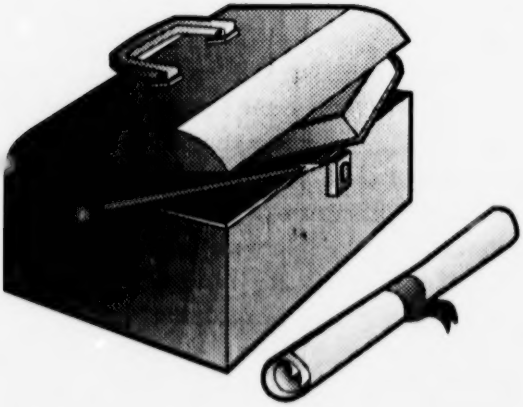


What are Thinker Tools?

Thinker Tools are created with the teacher in mind. Based on quality student resources, Thinker Tools help instructors apply a thinking strategy to an actual lesson. The exercises found in Thinker Tools offer educators a starting point with activities that serve as models for thoughtful instruction. Teachers can modify or replicate the lessons with other age-appropriate materials, eventually creating lesson plans of their own.

Teaching Thinking: Sequencing

Creative and critical thinking skills are crucial to students as they ready themselves to face the future. A curriculum that stresses critical and creative thinking skills better prepares students for the ever-changing, increasingly technical world in which we live. Teachers can teach students to think by encouraging and developing the micro-skills of thinking. Among the unending list of micro-skills are: brainstorming, predicting, sequencing, visualizing, and prioritizing.

Pigs, by Robert Munsch, is an excellent vehicle for an exercise in *sequencing*. Children find *Pigs* thoroughly enjoyable and naturally become involved in the events of the story. Because this book is so rich in possibilities, the suggested lesson plan uses a nested approach, integrating thinking skills, social skills, and visual organizers.

Sequencing

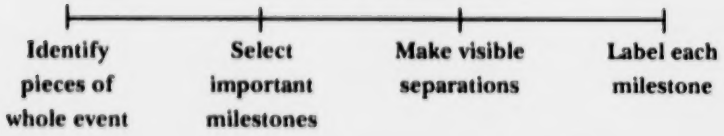
Before beginning this lesson plan, become familiar with the strategy for teaching and promoting student sequencing skills. Use the spectrum visual organizer to introduce this strategy to the class:

Introduce the concept of sequencing (putting objects, dates, and events in order) to the class. Give examples of times when students have used sequencing skills, such as alphabetizing words, telling a story, putting numbers in order, or even making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. There are certain steps that students follow first, second, and third.

Draw the spectrum line on the board or overhead and divide the line into equal sections. For younger children you can use a clothesline and clothespins to illustrate the spectrum concept more dramatically.

Point out that the spectrum line has a start and a finish. Each line that divides the spectrum stands for something that happens in between. These items are placed in order between the start and finish lines. Students should understand that events, dates, or objects must be placed on the line in chronological order, or in the order that they happen.

Steps for Sequencing



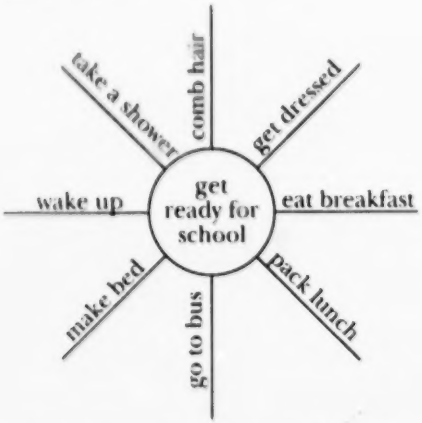
These steps will help explain and model the concept.

1. Identify the pieces of the whole event.
2. Select important milestones and put them in chronological order.
3. Make visible separations on the spectrum.
4. Label each milestone.

Use the Steps for Sequencing to model an example with the class. Try "Getting Ready for School" or one of your own.

Getting Ready for School

1. Brainstorm with students the things they do to get ready for school in the morning, such as wake up, take a shower, etc. Use a web to organize the ideas.

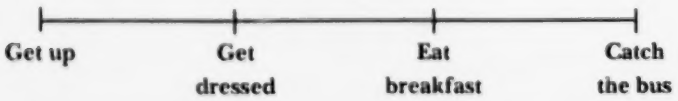


2. Choose the most important events and place them in order.
   a. get up
   b. get dressed
   c. eat breakfast
   d. catch the bus

3. Make divisions on the spectrum.

4. Label the spectrum with the events.

Getting Ready for School



Once the sequencing skill is learned, it can be transferred and applied to any subject or topic.

Pigs: Sequencing

A Lesson Plan

THINKING SKILL: *Sequencing*

OBJECTIVE: To improve student sequencing skills.

ACTIVITY

1. Arrange students in groups of three. It will help if each student has a role: recorder, checker, encourager, etc.

   Checker's job: Are we agreed on what to do?
   Are we doing what was asked? Is everyone helping?

   Recorder's job: Have I written down everyone's ideas?
   Does everyone understand?

   Encourager's job: Am I encouraging the group by saying, "Good idea! Great job!"?

   Tell students that they will be practicing sequencing skills with an exciting book called *Pigs*, by Robert N. Munsch.

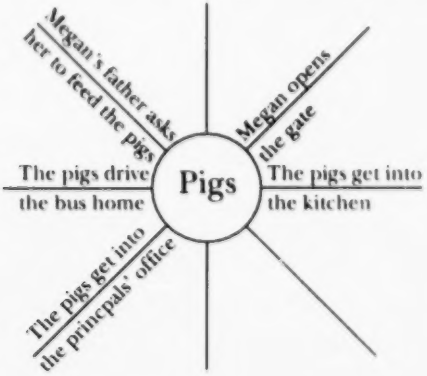
2. Point out to the class that they should be listening very carefully to the events of the story as you read it aloud. Remind students that it is important to pay attention to the order in which things happen when practicing sequencing skills.

3. Show students the cover of the book and begin the lesson by asking them to make predictions from the title and cover illustration. Ask students to predict what they think will happen in the story from looking at the picture. Survey the groups for their responses.

4. Throughout the story, stop and ask students to make more predictions. "What will Megan do next? What do you think happened to the pigs? Did they return to their pen?" Have the groups support their responses and explain them. Have them monitor previous predictions—were they on target?

5. Upon completion of the story, check for student comprehension and review the content of the story. Next, have students work in their groups to create their own spectrums of the story.

6. Have one student obtain chart paper and markers for the group to record its ideas. To help the class get started, use an attribute web on your overhead or chalkboard, and ask the class to suggest important events in the story. For example: Megan's father asks her to feed the pigs, Megan opens the gate, the pigs get into the principal's office, etc. List just a few of the responses on the attribute web. Now, stop and allow the groups to generate ideas on their own.


Megan's father asks her to feed the pigs
Megan opens the gate
The pigs drive the bus home
Pigs
The pigs get into the kitchen
The pigs get into the principals' office

7. Groups will record their ideas on their own attribute webs. Checkers can begin the discussion and make sure that everyone has a turn to contribute. Encouragers should provide comments of praise to the group, while recorders try to resolve any conflicts. In order to aid students with their task, list the steps for sequencing on the board or overhead.

8. Once students have filled in their webs and all responses have been recorded, have groups select those events from the story that they feel are most important. These events will be included on the spectrum. The students must reach consensus in order to fill in their spectrums.

9. After all groups have completed their spectrums, allow students to sample results with the entire class. Discuss the similarities and differences of the spectrums and check that the sequences are in chronological order.

METACOGNITIVE DISCUSSION

Now that students have practiced the skill of sequencing, it is time for them to "think about their thinking" and absorb what they have just done. This type of thinking is referred to as **metacognition**. Metacognition helps students make sense of what they have learned by reflecting on the work they've done. The following questions will help students think through the process and evaluate whether or not they have grasped the concept of "sequencing" from the lesson.

QUESTIONS FOR PROMOTING METACOGNITION

1. What were you supposed to do?
2. What did you do well?
3. What would you do differently next time?
4. Do you need any help?

In addition, have students complete a PMI chart. The PMI chart allows students to think about and evaluate the activity just completed. In this case, students will use the PMI chart to discuss *sequencing*. What did the students find beneficial about sequencing? What about it was a problem for them? What did they find interesting?

PLUS	MINUS	INTERESTING

CLOSURE

Have students make a personal spectrum chart about something that relates to them. The chart can pertain to anything from a schedule of their day or making their favorite recipe, to marking the important events of their lives to date. A personal sequence spectrum allows students to see how they use sequencing skills every day in their own lives.

Integrating the Skill Across the Curriculum

Extend the lesson with a few of these "thought starters." You can adjust them to your grade level.

Writing

- Take a paragraph from a textbook, mix up the sentences, and have students rewrite and rearrange the paragraph so that it makes sense.
- Students can write stories that contain a clear sequence of events and exchange them with classmates. Other students can make spectrums from the stories.

Literature

- Choose any other short story for the class to read and have them make a spectrum of events from it.
- Take several well-known children's stories and mix them up. Have students work in groups to reorder, rewrite, or retell them aloud in proper sequence.

Art

- Students can practice with sequences by stringing beads in a particular pattern.
- Have students use different shapes, sizes, and colors of construction paper to make designs featuring sequences.
- Have students create their own art project. Then have them record in sequence how they created their project.

History

- Have students use a spectrum to show how a bill becomes a law.
- Students can use a spectrum to illustrate the voyage of Columbus or any other explorer.
- Have students create a timeline for the most important events of the past year, decade, or century. They can work in groups or alone.

Science

- Students can use a spectrum to show how a caterpillar changes into a butterfly, a tadpole to a frog, or a seed to a flower.
- Encourage students to use spectrums to outline the steps for doing an experiment.
- Have them use a spectrum to outline the food chain.

Math

- With a spectrum, students can put a scrambled word problem in order.
- Ask students to use a spectrum to put numbers in sequence. Give them fractions, positive and negative numbers, and ordinal numbers.
- Have students write the sequence for solving a problem.

Recommended Reading

Blueprints for Thinking in the Cooperative Classroom

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Start Them Thinking

Teach Them Thinking

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A Thinker Tool: The Velveteen Rabbit

A Thinker Tool: The Paper Bag Princess

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A THINKER TOOL

for

The Velveteen Rabbit

by Margery Williams

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for

The Velveteen Rabbit

by
Margery Williams

Liesl Banks-Stiegman

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A Thinker Tool for *The Velveteen Rabbit*
First Printing

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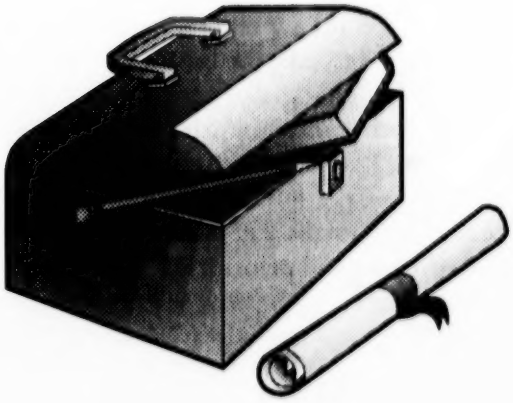

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Teaching Thinking: Self-Esteem

Creative and critical thinking skills are crucial to students as they ready themselves to face the future. Students are better prepared for the ever-changing, increasingly technical world in which we live when a curriculum stresses critical and creative thinking skills. Teachers can teach students to think by encouraging and developing the micro-skills of thinking. Among the unending list of micro-skills are: brainstorming, predicting, visualizing, classifying, and prioritizing. Additionally, we must not forget how important a healthy self-perception and high self-esteem is to the learning process. Research shows when children can problem solve and use their own thinking skills, they feel better about themselves.

The Velveteen Rabbit by Margery Williams, is a touching children's story that is ideal for an exercise in self-esteem. This sensitive story is the basis for a lesson that integrates self-evaluation skills and social skills with regard to self-esteem.

The Velveteen Rabbit: Self-Esteem

A Lesson Plan

THINKING SKILL: *Self-Esteem*
OBJECTIVE: To improve student self-perception and understanding

PRE-READING ACTIVITY:

1. Explain to the class that you will be reading a story called *The Velveteen Rabbit* by Margery Williams. Inform the class that the story is about a toy rabbit, made of velveteen, and his love for the boy to whom he belonged. As they will see in the story, the boy absolutely adored the rabbit, played with him all the time, and took him everywhere he went.

2. In pairs have students discuss a special toy or item (e.g., a doll or blanket) which they had that was very important to them. How did they feel about this toy? Why was it so important? How did they feel without their toy?

3. Sample some of the responses, asking students to share what they learned about their partner's feelings.

ACTIVITY:
Now, begin the story. Tell the class that the story deals with feelings and that you hope they will share some of their own feelings as you read together.

1. Begin reading *The Velveteen Rabbit* aloud to the class. Stop at the point in the story where the toys in the cupboard have snubbed the Velveteen Rabbit. Discuss this with the class and ask them affective questions. How do you think the Rabbit feels when none of the toys pay any attention to him and make fun of him? How do you feel when you are left out? How can you make others feel good, so they don't feel left out? Allow ample time for discussion so that several students can share their thoughts.

2. Start reading the story once again, stopping after the Skin Horse has described what being "Real" means. Have the students turn to their partners and discuss the concept as they understand it from the story. Sample their answers to make sure they understand the process. Ask them, "What has to happen to a toy before it becomes Real?"

3. Continue reading the story, stopping for a brief discussion after the boy says that the bunny is Real and Nana notices the Velveteen Rabbit's knowing expression. Ask the students to predict what is happening to the bunny and why?

4. Read on. Stop after the real rabbits talk to the Velveteen Rabbit in the field. Ask students, "How does the Velveteen Rabbit feel when the real rabbits laugh at him? Why do you think that?"

5. Continue reading. Stop after the Velveteen Rabbit becomes "Real." Now ask the students, "How do you think the Rabbit feels now that he is Real?"

6. Now read the last page. Ask students for their comments on the story. Did they like it? Why?

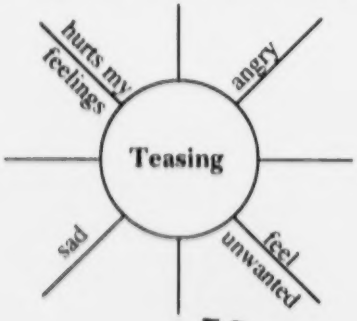
METACOGNITIVE DISCUSSION

Now that students have read the book, *The Velveteen Rabbit*, they are familiar with the range of emotions that the Rabbit experienced. However, students should look inward to focus on their own feelings.

Allow students to work with a partner to record their feelings using a visual organizer called a web. Choose a situation or scenario that you want the students to think about and discuss. This is recorded in the center of the web. Students will then write their feelings and emotions on the "spokes" of the web. Give them ample time to discuss and brainstorm about their emotions. After students have completed their webs, they can write an individual journal entry relaying their feelings.

Use the story for examples to start students thinking about their own feelings. Here are two examples.

Example 1: In the story, some of the real rabbits tease the Velveteen Rabbit because he cannot run, jump, and play like they can. Have you ever been teased or laughed at because you couldn't do something? How does it feel when people tease you?



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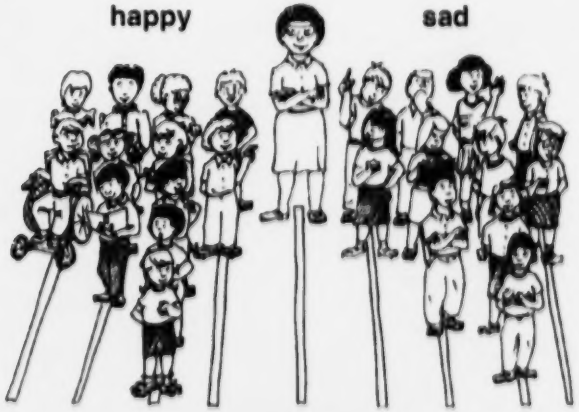
Example 2: Once the Velveteen Rabbit is made "Real", he is so happy! Is there anything you can think of that made you as happy as the Rabbit—a goal, event, or accomplishment? How did you feel?

Another suggestion for prompting students to think about their feelings is to use a Human Graph. Tell students that you want them to think about their feelings and that they will convey those feelings by being part of a Human Graph. Explain to the class how a Human Graph works.

Human Graph Directions: Stand in the center of the room, and have students gather around you. Then draw imaginary lines dividing the space and assign degrees of feeling. (Note: masking tape can be used to create the lines, making it easier for younger students to comprehend. Use the drawing as a model.)



Human Graph

Now, give students a situation and indicate a side for each opposite emotion. Allow students to stand on the line in a position that reflects their feelings. Ask students why they

chose that line and give them ample time to explain their feelings. Question various students along the graph. Relay other scenarios to the class and have them examine their feelings and display them on the Human Graph.

For example, assign the emotions of happy and sad to opposite ends of the Human Graph. Tell students to indicate how they feel during some of these situations:

- Celebrating your birthday at a party
- A brother or sister teases you
- You were not invited to a party
- A best friend gets to spend the night at your house
- Your parents have scolded you
- You have an argument with a good friend

Integrating the Skill Across the Curriculum

Extend the lesson with a few of these "thought starters." You can adjust them to your grade level.

Writing

- Students can write a story about a personal situation or relationship and reflect on their behavior in that situation.

- Have students write an essay about their feelings for an item or person in their life that is special to them.

- Ask students to write a paragraph giving advice on how they deal with their feelings when they are hurt.

Literature

- Students can write a fictional story about a character who experiences various emotions similar to those of the Velveteen Rabbit.

- Ask students to find another story that they have read that deals with an emotion such as happiness, sadness, joy, or love. Students should share this book with the class for others to enjoy and discuss.

History

- Have students find historical figures who succeeded although they were treated poorly or possessed a disability and report on them to the class - e.g., Harriet Tubman, Helen Keller.

- Students can choose a person from history and write about his or her admirable qualities, explaining why they feel that these qualities are important.

- Have a class discussion about people in current events that are recovering from catastrophes and hardships. Discuss what these people might be feeling.

Science

- Just as people need nurturing and social interaction, so do animals. Have students research animal families to discover how they interact with one another.

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